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SEP 06 2016

EPA-REGION 10

August 28, 2016

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Politicians think by pouring more money into it, they'll be able to clean up the Willamette River. The river is not clean and needs attention, this is absolutely true. It would be nice to be able to stick your hand in the water without having to worry about what kind of infections you might end up with. I used to participate in dragon boat racing. One time, my hand hit the side of a canoe and broke off part of my thumbnail, creating an open cut. I was no longer able to paddle and just had to sit and ride along. There was no way my leader was going to let me continue racing and take a chance that I would get an infection from the water. Yes, the river is a mess. However, throwing billions of dollars into a project that won't solve the pollution problem is not the right answer. With the amount of money the EPA says it will take to complete this project, imagine how much bottled water they could buy. Enough to fill the river with all new water! That would probably be cheaper.

You can't just clean up the river in the Portland downtown area and expect that to resolve the issue. The problem starts upstream from there in Newberg where they're pulling out three-legged frogs and all kinds of crazy things. That's an area that's highly contaminated and that water flows downstream to Portland. Cleaning up the water that is coming into the river is what's going to flush the contaminants from the Willamette. Digging up the bottom is only going to stir up the contamination that's buried and make matters worse.

To make plans based on yesterday's data is stupid, but that's exactly what the EPA is doing. The test results their plan is based on are over 10 years old. If they would retest now they would see that the river is actually getting better on its own. I don't have too much faith in the EPA due to what they've done in other areas of the nation. One example is the hugely toxic Love Canal in New York. I'm not sure they have ever gotten it cleaned up. My opinion is that the EPA needs to limit their duties to just testing and unbiased reporting. Let someone else do the actual cleanup when it's truly needed. If the EPA would communicate and work together with other, more competent agencies like the Corps of Engineers, we would have more productive results in situations like this.

Sincerely,

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